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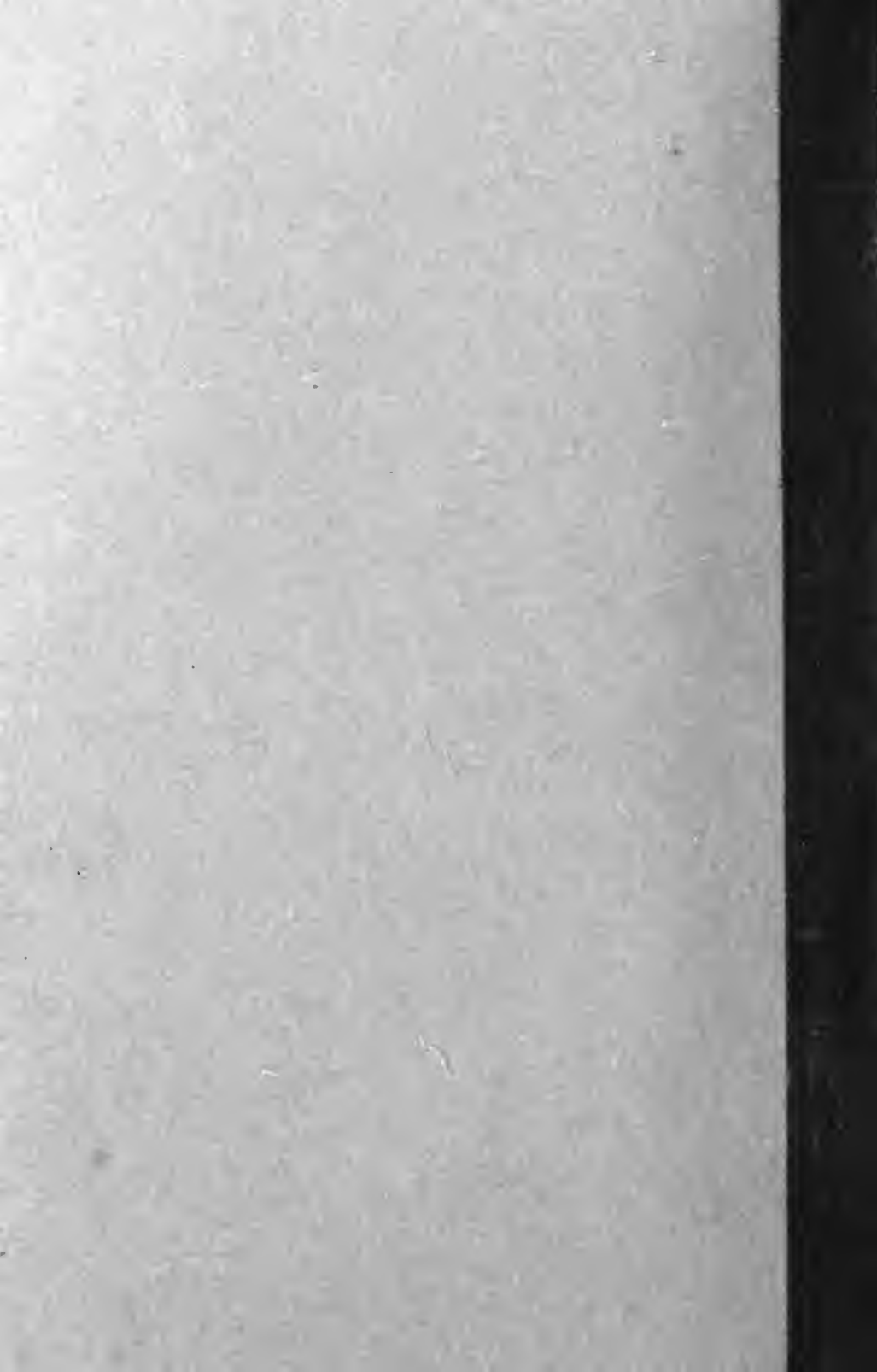
International Workingmens'
Association

Resolutions of the Congress
of Geneva, 1866

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THE
INTERNATIONAL
WORKING MEN'S
ASSOCIATION.

Congress. 3rd. Brussels 1868

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNCIL:—

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Resolutions of the Congress of Geneva, 1866,
and the Congress of Brussels, 1868.

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RESOLUTIONS

OF THE

FIRST AND THIRD CONGRESSES

OF THE

International Working Men's Association.

I.

Resolutions of First Congress Assembled at Geneva, September, 1866.

As SOME of the resolutions passed at the first Congress may be considered as part of the platform of principles of the International Working Men's Association, and the reports of that congress have had but a limited circulation, the General Council deems it advisable to republish them with the issue of the resolutions passed at the last Congress.

Amongst the various subjects that came under the consideration of the first—the Geneva Congress—the following are the most important:—

1. International combination of efforts, by the agency of the Association, in the struggle between labour and capital.

a. From a general point of view, this question embraces the whole activity of the International Association, which aims at combining and generalising the till now disconnected efforts for emancipation by the working classes in different countries.

b. To counteract the intrigues of capitalists always ready, in cases of strikes and lockouts, to misuse the workman of one country as a tool against the workman of another, is one of the particular functions which our society has hitherto performed with success. It is one of the great purposes of the Association to make the workmen of different countries not only feel but act as rethren and comrades in the army of emancipation

c. One great "International combination of efforts will be a statistical inquiry into the situation of the working classes of all civilized countries to be instituted by the working classes themselves." To act with any success, the materials to be acted upon must be known. By initiating so great a work, the working men will prove their ability to take their own fate into their own hands.

The Congress therefore proposes that in each locality where branches of our Association exist, the work be immediately commenced, and evidence collected on the different points specified in the subjoined scheme of inquiry; the Congress invites the working men of Europe and the United States of America to co-operate in gathering the elements of the statistics of the working class; reports and evidence to be forwarded to the central council. The central council shall elaborate them into a general report, adding the evidence as an appendix. This report, together with its appendix, shall be laid before the next annual congress, and after having received its sanction, be printed at the expense of the association.

General scheme of inquiry, which may of course be modified by each locality. 1. Industry, name of. 2. Age and sex of the employed. 3. Number of the employed. 4. Salaries and wages; (a) apprentices; (b) wages by the day or by piece work; scale paid by middle men. Weekly, yearly average. 5. (a) Hours of work in factories. (b) The hours of work with small employers and in homework, if the business be carried on in those different modes. (c) Nightwork and daywork. 6. Mealtimes and treatment. 7. Sort of workshop and work; overcrowding, defective ventilation, want of sunlight, use of gaslight, cleanliness, &c. 8. Nature of occupation. 9. Effect of employment upon the physical condition. 10. Moral condition. Education. 11. State of trade: whether season trade, or more or less uniformly distributed over the year, whether greatly fluctuating, whether exposed to foreign competition—whether destined principally for home or foreign consumption, &c.

2.—Limitation of the working day.

A preliminary condition, without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation must prove abortive, is the legal

limitation of the working day. It is needed to restore the health and physical energies of the working class—that is the great body of every nation, as well as to secure them the possibility of intellectual development, social intercourse, social and political action.

The Congress proposes eight hours work as the legal limit of the working day. This limitation being generally claimed by the workmen of the United States of America, the vote of the congress will raise it to the common platform of the working classes all over the world. Nightwork to be but exceptionally permitted, in trades or branches of trades specified by law. The tendency must be to suppress all nightwork. This paragraph refers only to adult persons, male or female, the latter, however, to be rigorously excluded from all nightwork whatever, and all sort of work hurtful to the delicacy of the sex, or exposing their bodies to poisonous and otherwise deleterious agencies. By adult persons are meant all persons having reached or passed the age of 18 years.

3. Juvenile and children's labour (both sexes).

The congress considers the tendency of modern industry to make children and young persons of both sexes co-operate in the great work of social production, as a progressive, sound and legitimate tendency, although, under the domination of capital, it has become an abomination. In a rational state of society every child whatever, from the age of nine years, ought to become a productive labourer in the same way that no able-bodied adult person ought to be exempt from the general law of nature, viz. : to work in order to be able to eat, and work not only with the brain but with the hands too. However, for the present, we have only to deal with the children and young persons belonging to the working people. They ought to be divided into three classes, to be treated differently; the first class to range from 9 to 12; the second, from 13 to 15; and the third, to comprise the ages of 16 and 17 years. We propose that the employment of the first class in any workshop or housework be legally restricted to two; that of the second, to four; and that of the third, to six hours. For the third class, there must be a break of at least one hour for meals or relaxation. It may be desirable to begin elementary school instruction before the age of nine years; but we deal here only with the most indispensable

antidotes against the tendencies of a social system which degrades the working man into a mere instrument for the accumulation of capital, and transforms parents by their necessities into slave-holders, sellers of their own children. The right of children and young persons must be vindicated. They are unable to act for themselves. It is, therefore, the duty of society to act on their behalf. If the middle and higher classes neglect their duties towards their offspring, it is their own fault. Sharing the privileges of these classes, the child is condemned to suffer from their prejudices. The case of the working class stands quite different. The working man is no free agent. In too many cases, he is even too ignorant to understand the true interest of his child, or the normal conditions of human development. However, the more enlightened part of the working class fully understand that the future of their class, and, therefore, of mankind, altogether depends upon the formation of the rising working generation. They know that, before everything else, the children and juvenile workers must be saved from the crushing effects of the present system. This can only be effected by converting social reason into social force, and under given circumstances, there exists no other method of doing so, than through general laws, enforced by the power of the state. In enforcing such laws, the working class do not fortify governmental power. On the contrary, they transform that power, now used against them, into their own agency. They effect by one general act what they would vainly attempt by a multitude of isolated individual efforts. Proceeding from this standpoint, we say that no parent and no employer ought to be allowed to use juvenile labour, except when combined with education. By education we understand three things. Firstly: Mental education. Secondly: Bodily education, such as is given in schools, by gymnastics, and by military exercise. Thirdly: Technological training, which imparts the general principles of all processes of production, and, simultaneously initiates the child and young person in the practical use and handling of the elementary instruments of all trades. A gradual and progressive course of mental, gymnastic, and technological training ought to correspond with the classification of the juvenile labourers. The costs of the technological schools ought to be partly met by the sale of their products. The combination of paid productive labour, mental education, bodily exercise and poly-

technic training, will raise the working class far above the level of the higher and middle classes. It is self-understood that the employment of all persons from 9 and to 17 years (inclusively) in nightwork and all health-injuring trades must be strictly prohibited by law.

4.—Co-operative labour.

It is the business of the International Working Men's Association to combine and generalise the spontaneous movements of the working classes, but not to dictate or impose any doctrinary system whatever. The congress shall, therefore, proclaim no special system of co-operation, but limit itself to the enunciation of a few general principles.

(a) We acknowledge the co-operative movement as one of the transforming forces of the present society based upon class antagonism. Its great merit is to practically show, that the present pauperising, and despotic system of the subordination of labour to capital can be superseded by the republican and beneficent system of the association of free and equal producers.

(b) Restricted, however, to the dwarfish forms into which individual wages slaves can elaborate it by their efforts, the co-operative system will never transform capitalistic society. To convert social production into one large and harmonious system of free co-operative labour, general social changes are wanted, changes of the general conditions of society, never to be realised save by the transfer of the organised forces of society, viz.: the State power, from capitalists and landlords to the producers themselves.

(c) We recommend to the working men to embark in co-operative production rather than in co-operative stores. The latter touch but the surface of the present economical system, the former attacks its groundwork.

(d.) We recommend to all co-operative societies to convert one part of their joint income into a fund for propagating their principles by example as well as by precept, in other words, by promoting the establishment of new co-operative fabrics as well as by teaching and preaching.

(e) In order to prevent co-operative societies from degenerating into ordinary-middle class joint-stock companies (*sociétés par actions*), all workmen employed, whether shareholders or not, ought

to share alike. As a mere temporary expedient, we are willing to allow shareholders a low rate of interest.

5.—Trades' Unions. Their past, present, and future.

(a) Their past.

Capital is concentrated social force, while the workman has only to dispose of his individual working force. The contract between capital and labour can therefore never be struck on equitable terms, equitable even in the sense of a society which places the ownership of the material means of life and labour on one side and the vital productive energies on the opposite side. The only social power of the workmen is their number. The force of numbers, however, is broken by disunion. The disunion of the workmen is created and perpetuated by their unavoidable competition amongst themselves. Trades' Unions originally sprung up from spontaneous attempts of workmen at removing or at least checking that competition in order to conquer such terms of contract as might raise them at least above the condition of mere slaves. The immediate object of Trades' Unions was therefore confined to everyday necessities, to expedients for the obstruction of the incessant encroachments of capital; in one word, to questions of wages and time of labour. This activity of the Trades' Unions is not only legitimate, it is necessary. It cannot be dispensed with so long as the present system of production lasts. On the contrary, it must be generalised by the formation and combination of Trades' Unions throughout all countries. On the other hand, unconsciously to themselves, the Trades' Unions were forming centres of organization of the working class, as the mediæval municipalities and communes did for the middle class. If the Trades' Unions are required for the guerilla fights between capital and labour, they are still more important as organized agencies for superseding the very system of wages labour.

(b) Their present.

Too exclusively bent upon the local and immediate struggles with capital, the Trades' Unions have not yet fully understood their power of action against the system of wages slavery itself. They therefore kept too much aloof from general and political movements. Of late, however, they seem to awaken to some sense of their great historical mission, as appears, for instance, from their participation, in England, in the recent political movement;

from the enlarged views taken of their functions in the United States, and from the following resolution passed at the recent great conference of Trades' delegates at Sheffield:—"That this conference, fully appreciating the efforts made by the International Association to unite in one common bond of brotherhood the working men of all countries, most earnestly recommend to the various societies here represented, the advisability of becoming affiliated to that body, believing that it is essential to the progress and prosperity of the entire working community."

(c) Their future.

Apart from their original purposes they must now learn to act deliberately as organising centres of the working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction. Considering themselves and acting as the champions and representatives of the whole working class, they cannot fail to enlist the non-society men into their ranks. They must look carefully after the interests of the worst paid trades, such as the agricultural labourers, rendered powerless by exceptional circumstances. They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions.

II.

Resolutions of Third Congress Assembled at Brussels, in September, 1868.

Trades Unions and Strikes.

Resolved—1. That strikes are not a means to the complete emancipation of the working classes, but are frequently a necessity in the actual situation of the struggle between labour and capital.

2. That it is requisite to subject them to certain rules of organization, opportunity, and legitimacy.

3. In such trades where no unions and benefit societies exist as yet, it is necessary to create them. The unions of all trades and countries must combine. In each local federation of trade societies a fund destined to support strikes ought to be established. In one word, the work undertaken by the International Working Men's Association is to be continued so as to make the working men enter the association *en masse*.

4. It is necessary to appoint in each locality a committee consisting of delegates of the various societies, who shall act as umpires, deciding eventually upon the advisability and legitimacy of strikes. For the rest the different sections will, of course, in the mode of appointing these councils, follow the particular manners, habits, and laws of their respective places.

The Effects of Machinery in the Hands of the Capitalist Class.

Considering that on the one side machinery has proved a most powerful instrument of despotism and extortion in the hands of the capitalist class, that on the other side the development of machinery creates the material conditions necessary for the

superseding of the wages system by a truly social system of production.

Considering that machinery will render no real service to the working men until by a more equitable, social organisation, it be put into their own possession, the congress declares—

1. That it is only by means of co-operative associations and an organisation of mutual credit that the producer can obtain possession of machinery.

2. That even in the existing state of things it is possible for working men organised in trade societies to enforce some guarantees or compensation in cases of sudden displacement by machinery.

Credit Institutions for the Working Classes.

Considering 1. That interest and profit of every kind accruing to capital, whatever form it may assume, is a black mail levied upon the labour of to-day for the benefit of him whom the labour of yesterday has already enriched, and that if he has the right to accumulate, he has no right to do so at the expense of others ;

2. That, therefore, the interest on capital is a permanent source of injustice and inequality, and that the co-operative associations by continuing this practice, do simply transfer the principle of egotism—the gnawing worm of the actual state of society—from the individuality to the collectivity ;

3. That the application of the principle of solidarity on a large scale is the only practical means at the disposal of the working class to struggle against the moneyed interest ;

The Congress believes the foundation of banks of exchange, based upon cost price, to be the means of rendering credit democratic and equal, of simplifying the relations between producer and consumer, of withdrawing labour from the domination of capital, and reducing the latter to its natural and legitimate function, that of being the agent of labour.

Considering, however, that it is not possible to pronounce at once upon the immediate practicability of banks of exchange,

The Congress, while maintaining the theoretical affirmation of mutual credit, recommends that the project of rules presented by the Brussels section be sent to all the branches and submitted to their serious discussion, and that the next Congress decide upon it.

The English, German, and some Swiss delegates abstained from voting.

The Question of Education.

Cognisant that it is impossible at present to organise a rational system of education, the Congress invites the different sections to establish courses of public lectures on scientific and economical subjects, and thus to remedy as much as possible the short comings of the education actually received by the working man. It is understood that the reduction of the hours of labour is an indispensable preliminary condition of any true system of education.

Property in Land, Mines, Railroads, &c.

1. In relation to mines, collieries, railways, &c.—Considering that these great productive forces are fixed in, and occupy a large portion of the soil, the common gift of nature,

That they can only be worked by means of machinery and a collective labour power,

That the machinery and the collective labour power, which to-day exist only for the advantage of the capitalists, ought in future to benefit the whole people;

The Congress resolves—

a. That the quarries, collieries, and other mines, as well as the railways, ought in a normal state of society to belong to the community represented by the state, a state itself subject to the laws of justice.

b. That the quarries, collieries, and other mines, and railways, be let by the state, not to companies of capitalists as at present, but to companies of working men bound by contract to guarantee

to society the rational and scientific working of the railways, etc., at a price as nearly as possible approximate to the working expense. The same contract ought to reserve to the state the right to verify the accounts of the companies, so as to prevent the possibility of any reconstitution of monopolies. A second contract ought to guarantee the mutual rights of each member of the companies in respect to his fellow workmen.

2. In Relation to Agricultural Property :—Considering that the necessities of production and the application of the known laws of agronomy require culture on a large scale, and necessitate the introduction of machinery and the organisation of agricultural labour power, and that generally modern economical development tends to agriculture on a large scale ;

Considering, that consequently agricultural labour and property in arable soil ought to be put on the same footing as mines ;

Considering that the productive properties of the soil are the prime materials of all products, the prime source of all means of production, and of all desirable things that cost no labour ;

The Congress thinks that the economical development of modern society will create the social necessity of converting arable land into the common property of society, and of letting the soil on behalf of the state to agricultural companies under conditions analagous to those stated in regard to mines and railways.

3. In Relation to Canals, Highways and Telegraphs.—Considering that the roads and other means of communication require a common social direction, the Congress thinks they ought to remain the common property of society.

4. In Relation to Forests.—Considering that the abandonment of forests to private individuals causes the destruction of woods necessary for the conservation of springs, and, as a matter of course, of the good qualities of the soil, as well as the health and lives of the population, the Congress thinks that the forests ought to remain the property of society.

Reduction of the Hours of Labour.

A resolution having been unanimously passed by the Congress of Geneva, 1866, to the effect that the legal limitation of the

working day is a preliminary condition to all ulterior social improvement of the working classes, the Congress is of opinion that the time has arrived when practical effect should be given to that resolution, and that it has become the duty of all the branches to agitate that question practically in the different countries where the International Working Men's Association is established.

War and Standing Armies.

Considering that our social institution as well as the centralisation of political power, are a permanent cause of war, which can only be removed by a thorough social reform; that the people even now can diminish the number of wars by opposing those who declare and make war; that this concerns above all the working classes, who have almost exclusively to shed their blood; that to do this there is a practical and legal means which can be immediately acted upon; that as the body politic could not go on for any length of time without labour, it would suffice for the working men to strike work to render war impossible; the International Working Men's Congress recommends to all the sections, and to the members of working men's societies in particular and to the working classes in general, to cease work in case a war be declared in their country. The Congress counts upon the spirit of solidarity which animates the working men of all countries, and entertains a hope that means would not be wanting in such an emergency to support the people against their government.

Reply to the Invitation of the League of Peace.

1. The delegates of the International Working Men's Congress who may attend the Peace Congress at Berne are instructed to carry with them the resolutions passed at the Congresses of Geneva, Lausanne, and Brussels, and lay them before the Peace Congress;

but any discussions, resolutions, or action arising out of it will be at their personal responsibility.

2. The delegates of the International Working Men's Congress declare that the League of Peace and Liberty has no *raison d'être* in the presence of the efforts of the International Working Men's Association, and invite the members of that League to enter the different sections of the International Working Men's Association in their respective countries.

Resolution passed by the German Delegates.

"We, the German delegates at the International Working Men's Congress at Brussels, recommend to the working men of all countries the work of Karl Marx: "Das Kapital," published last year, and urge upon them the desirability of endeavouring to cause that important work to be translated into those languages into which it has not yet been translated. Marx has the inestimable merit of being the first political economist who has scientifically analysed capital and dissolved it into its component parts."

The Statistical Inquiry into the Situation of the Working Classes.

Appeal of the General Council at London to the Workmen of Europe and America.

Various causes, over which the council had no control, have hitherto prevented the completion of the statistical inquiry, but it is by no means abandoned. On the contrary its necessity and importance become more manifest every day, and the council counts upon the fraternal co-operation of the leaders of the working class to bring the undertaking to a successful issue on an early day.

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Resolutions of the Congress
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